

**GUIDE FOR
TEAMS CONDUCTING
COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS**

**Campus Alberta Quality Council
11th Floor, Commerce Place
10155 – 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L5
Phone: (780) 427-8921
Fax: (780) 427-0423
E-mail: caqc@gov.ab.ca
Web: www.caqc.gov.ab.ca**

REV: September 2009

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of comprehensive evaluations	1
2. THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM.....	2
Recruitment and appointment of the evaluation team.....	2
Size and composition	2
Roles.....	2
<i>Chair</i>	2
<i>Members</i>	3
<i>CAQC Secretariat Coordinator</i>	3
Conduct.....	3
3. THE VISIT.....	3
Council's expectations	3
Date and length of the external evaluation team visit.....	4
Preparation for the visit.....	4
Establishing the site visit schedule	5
Conduct of the visit.....	6
(a) <i>Team orientation and meeting with CAQC Chair</i>	6
(b) <i>Initial meeting of the team</i>	6
(c) <i>Site visit interviews</i>	6
(d) <i>Team conferences</i>	6
(e) <i>Exit interview with the president or designate</i>	7
(f) <i>Final team conference</i>	7
(g) <i>Contact with the institution</i>	7
4. REPORT OF THE EVALUATION TEAM.....	7
Nature of the report	7
Preparation of the report.....	8
Distribution of the report	9
Consideration of the report and response to it	9
5. ARRANGEMENTS.....	9
Communication	9
Materials provided to members of the external evaluation team	9
The site visit	10
Accommodations and expenses.....	10
Hospitality.....	11
Feedback	11
Additional information	11
APPENDIX A	12
Monitoring of Approved Degree Programs.....	12
APPENDIX B	18
Quality Assessment Standards – Organizational	18
APPENDIX C	20
Quality Assessment Standards - Program	20
APPENDIX D	22
Code of Conduct for Reviewers	22

1. INTRODUCTION

The Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) is responsible for assessing all degree program applications from all post-secondary institutions wishing to offer degree programs in Alberta and making recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education with regard to program approval. It also is responsible for monitoring approved degree programs to ensure they continue to meet Council's conditions and standards of institutional and program quality. In addition to degree programs approved on recommendation of CAQC, Council's monitoring role also applies to degree programs approved by the Private Colleges Accreditation Board and to any approved degree program referred to it by the Minister.

Section 10 of the Approval of Programs of Study Regulation indicates that, if Council determines that an institution no longer meets minimum organizational requirements or an approved degree program no longer meets Council's standards of quality, it may recommend that an approved degree program be terminated in the case of public institutions or, in the case of private institutions, that the Order in Council allowing them to offer the program be rescinded.

To fulfill its monitoring role, Council has adopted two forms of periodic evaluation – annual reporting and comprehensive evaluations. (Further information is provided in Appendix A.) The purpose of this *Guide for Teams Conducting Comprehensive Evaluations* is to provide guidance to members of the comprehensive evaluation team with respect to Council's expectations about members' roles and responsibilities and to assist them in planning and conducting their activities.

Purpose of comprehensive evaluations

Council normally conducts at least one comprehensive evaluation (a combined organizational and program(s) evaluation) of an institution offering approved degree programs in Alberta. The first evaluation normally occurs five years after the institution begins offering its first approved degree program. Normally, this evaluation will occur during the sixth academic year. A subsequent comprehensive evaluation may be conducted at Council's discretion.

The purposes of the comprehensive evaluations by Council include the following:

- to determine whether an institution and its approved programs continue to meet organizational and program quality standards.
- to determine whether an institution has met or has made satisfactory progress towards meeting any commitments it made to Council regarding programs, staff, libraries, facilities or any other matter.
- to determine whether an institution has
 - (a) satisfied conditions specified by Council;
 - (b) considered fully the comments, suggestions and recommendations of reports by evaluation teams, insofar as they have been supported by Council, and have responded satisfactorily to them; and
 - (c) developed suitable mechanisms to undertake its own self-evaluation.
- to provide a basis for judgments regarding
 - (a) the continuation of an approved degree program, including any Council requirements or
 - (b) the withdrawal of approval of a degree program.

Council's comprehensive evaluation of each institution primarily consists of the following components:

1. the institution's self-study,
2. the report of the external evaluation team following a site visit, and
3. the response by the institution to the report of the external evaluation team.

Approximately one year before a comprehensive evaluation, Council notifies the institution of the impending evaluation and asks it to conduct an institutional self-study. The guidelines for self-studies are found at www.caqc.gov.ab.ca/TemplateForms/. The self-study, which normally is to be submitted one year later, is a key document for Council and its comprehensive evaluation teams.

2. THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM

As peer evaluation is an essential component of Council's evaluations, CAQC appoints an external evaluation team to assist it with the comprehensive evaluation. Using the institution's self-study and insights gained from a site visit to the applicant institution, the external evaluation team provides a thoughtful assessment of how successful the institution has been in implementing and maintaining quality degree programs. Ultimately, this information will help Council decide on whether or not it recommends that the program be terminated as per section 10 of the Approval of Programs of Study Regulation.

Recruitment and appointment of the evaluation team

Council appoints the members of the evaluation team and designates one of them as the chair. Although the final decision regarding the composition of the evaluation team rests with Council, the institution, as well as Council members, may suggest persons they would like to have included on the team provided there are no conflicts of interest. In selecting potential reviewers, Council is looking for individuals with personal stature in the post-secondary academic community; relevant academic qualifications and achievements; experience in evaluating academic programs; significant experience in post-secondary educational management and financing; experience in organizational design and behaviour; or training and experience in assessment and evaluation.

When possible, a complete list of nominees is sent to the institution and Council members for comment prior to recruitment. Then once the team is recruited and its membership ratified by Council, the institution is informed. Council reserves the right to add other potential reviewers if recruitment to a particular date proves to be difficult. It is important that potential members of the evaluation team declare any conflict of interest at the time of their nomination.

Size and composition

Normally, the team will consist of three or four external (peer) experts, although the size and composition will vary depending on the institution. The Director of the CAQC Secretariat, or designate, may act as an advisory member of the team.

Roles

Chair

The chair of the external evaluation team will plan the strategy for the visit; will be in charge of scheduling and related activities; will speak for the team; will assess the expertise and experience of team members and decide their assignments; will consult with team members to ensure they are comfortable with the assignments; will assume responsibility for the preparation and production of

the final report to Council; and may be asked to present the team's findings at one of Council's meetings. In developing the schedule for the visit, the chair will consult with team members and with the vice-president academic or designate to develop an appropriate schedule. The CAQC Secretariat will provide whatever assistance is needed with respect to establishing the site visit schedule, etc. Some chairs may work directly with the institution to establish the site visit schedule; others prefer to work with the institution through the CAQC Secretariat.

Members

Team members will be responsible for specific functions, as determined by the chair. Receiving a specific assignment does not preclude the need for each member to review the entire documentation.

CAQC Secretariat Coordinator

To facilitate the team's work, the Director of the CAQC Secretariat, or designate, will coordinate the review and may serve as an advisory member of the team. During the site visit, this individual will liaise with the institutional contact should the team seek further information or clarification. This member will have access to all material relevant to the external evaluation and will take part in team discussions, but will not be involved in writing the report.

Conduct

Evaluation team members must respect the confidential nature of third party information submitted by the institution and restrict the use of this information to their work in relation to Council. All copies of this material must be returned to the CAQC Secretariat when the activity for which it was required is completed. As well, team members are reminded that any records in the custody or under the control of Council are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. This includes the report of the external evaluation team to Council, as well as the institution's response to the report. During the recruitment process, Council relies on the personal and professional integrity of individuals to declare if there is any potential conflict of interest. At the orientation meeting with the CAQC Chair, all team members will be asked to sign a copy of the Code of Conduct, which is found in Appendix D.

3. THE VISIT

Council's expectations

The Comprehensive Team will assess the systems, processes and academic climate on the institution's campus and the extent to which they support quality degree programs; evaluate the historical outcomes of the approved programs; provide comment on the institution's proposed strategic plans for the future; and assess its capability and plans to undertake its own self-evaluation in the future.

Within the framework of Council's organizational assessment standards (see Appendix B) and its program assessment standards (see Appendix C), the evaluators provide an independent opinion on:

- the extent to which the institution continues to meet Council's organizational standards
- the extent to which the institution's approved degree programs meet Council's program quality standards

- the extent to which the institution has met or has made satisfactory progress towards meeting any commitments it made to Council regarding approved degree programs, staff, libraries, facilities or any other matter
- the extent to which the institution has satisfied any conditions set by Council
- the extent to which the institution has considered fully and responded satisfactorily to the suggestions/recommendations of Council's evaluation teams if they were supported by Council
- the extent to which the institution has developed suitable mechanisms to undertake its own self-evaluation

Without intending to restrict the scope of the external evaluation team's review, Council expects to have drawn to its attention what, in the opinion of the members of the team, are the strengths and weaknesses of the institution with respect to its organization and the approved degree programs. As well, Council would like to be informed of any opportunities the external evaluation team perceives for improving the organization and the approved programs, including suggestions for overcoming any perceived weaknesses or shortcomings.

Overall, Council expects constructive criticism where that is warranted, and a fair presentation of the positive side of the institution's success in offering quality degree programs. It is important to stress that the team's report is to be made to the Council and not to the institution.

Date and length of the external evaluation team visit

The external evaluation team's visit to the institution normally will take place when classes are in progress, at a time convenient to the institution and the external evaluation team, and normally will take one and one-half or two days. If not already determined at the time of appointment of the team, the date(s) for the visit will be determined by the Secretariat in consultation with the chair of the external evaluation team, the institution president or designate and the members of the team. A half-day meeting of the team including an orientation meeting with Council's Chair will precede the time on campus.

Preparation for the visit

In addition to this document, comprehensive evaluation team members will receive the following set of materials from the CAQC Secretariat:

- the institution's self-study and any pertinent institutional documents (calendar, faculty handbook, etc.),
- the report of any previous comprehensive evaluation, if applicable, or the reports of the initial organizational and program evaluations, the institution's response to them, and the final recommendation of PCAB or CAQC,
- summary information from past annual reports,
- applicable correspondence between the Council and the institution,
- CAQC's organizational and program assessment standards

Team members are encouraged to study the material and familiarize themselves with Council's assessment standards in advance of the orientation meeting. Some teams agree to make contact with each other via e-mail or telephone prior to the first meeting. When reviewing these documents, team members are encouraged to ask themselves questions such as those listed below.

- Is there anything that requires further clarification?

- Are there any apparent inconsistencies in the documentation?
- What additional information is desirable?
- Is there sufficient evidence about the achievements of students, graduates, staff and the institution to support a judgment on the institution's effectiveness in achieving its objectives for the approved programs?
- Has the institution met the specific conditions/expectations of PCAB or CAQC, if any were established?
- Is there adequate information about the teaching-learning environment?
- What are the key questions that need to be addressed during the visit and in which interview session?
- Who are the principal people to be interviewed?
- How can the team best be deployed in conducting the evaluation?

The Secretariat staff member coordinating the review should be informed of the need for any additional or clarifying information well in advance of the team's initial meeting.

By being prepared, team members will be better able to take systematic notes during the visit, develop insights based on their site visit observations, and participate with focus in the team deliberations.

Establishing the site visit schedule

Prior to the visit, the chair (or CAQC Secretariat coordinator) will work with the institution's vice-president academic or designate to establish the site visit schedule. The chair and members of the team will identify the groups or specific individuals with whom they wish to meet and a detailed schedule will be established. Specific areas for discussion or the assessment standards to be addressed should be identified for each interview session. These are intended only as a guide as often the responses to questions lead to other topics or issues.

During the visit, the team will wish to interview faculty, administrators, and students and alumni. Depending on questions that might arise during review of the documentation, they may also wish to meet with representatives of the governing board, support/collaborating staff and examine facilities (library, computer labs, etc.) and other resources, analyze relevant institutional policies and practices, review student work or observe classes in session. The team's expectations need to be made clear prior to the site visit. Typically the team will operate as a single group, but, at the discretion of the team, they may split into subgroups to hold concurrent sessions with more interviewees within the time on campus.

The team may ask the institution to be responsible for the selection of students, alumni and faculty to be interviewed in line with parameters established by the team. In other cases, the team may ask that faculty or students self-select or be selected by their representative organizations. Some teams may wish to have open sessions designated on the schedule when faculty or other interested people can make an appointment (or drop-in) for interviews with the team. Such open sessions allow for input to be provided by individuals outside the groups and categories identified by the institution and team. These appointments are typically short (e.g., 10 minutes). If a team wishes to have an open session, the opportunity should be advertised by the institution in advance of the visit and a schedule established. Normally, the team asks that administration not attend interview sessions with students/alumni and faculty.

If a tour of the facility is arranged and there are time restrictions, the team may wish to suggest that the tour be limited by naming specific areas they wish to see.

Conduct of the visit

(a) Team orientation and meeting with CAQC Chair

Prior to the site visit, the CAQC chair and Director of the Secretariat, or designate, will meet with the team to provide an orientation to the work of the CAQC, to the organizational evaluation process, and to the organizational and program assessment standards. As well, the CAQC Chair will alert members to any matters of particular concern to Council and answer questions the team might have. Any uncertainties the team members have about Council's policies, procedures or standards should be discussed and, if possible, removed. The CAQC Chair will indicate to team members when their report to CAQC is due, typically three weeks after the site visit.

(b) Initial meeting of the team

Following the orientation meeting with the CAQC Chair, the team will meet just prior to, or at the beginning of, the site visit in order to further orient members to their task. This meeting is critical as it provides members of the team with an opportunity to share preliminary impressions, review the team's schedule, identify issues to be raised during each interview, review individual assignments and discuss the format and preparation of their report. It is helpful if the team's chair presents a draft outline of the report at the meeting. All members should come to the meeting fully prepared for the visit by having a list of questions regarding the documentation and a list of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. Members can then determine the most appropriate questions to ask in each interview session.

(c) Site visit interviews

As noted earlier, the team will likely wish to interview faculty, administrators, support/collaborating staff, and students and alumni; examine facilities and resources; and analyze relevant institutional policies and practices. The team's chair might begin each interview session by framing the objectives of the interview and posing an open-ended question. This could then be followed by more specific, probing questions and final statements confirming impressions. The questions should evoke analysis and dialogue. Team members should avoid preceding a question with a wordy preamble, stringing a number of questions together, making too many references to how things are done at the member's home campus, or presenting a monologue.

The team should create an atmosphere of genuine dialogue by acting as colleagues and peers rather than as inspectors or interrogators.

Members are encouraged to take careful notes of each interview session as they will be invaluable when writing the report.

(d) Team conferences

Throughout the day, time should be scheduled when the team can meet *in camera* to share findings and identify questions that may require a deeper investigation. These sessions also provide time for the team to remind itself of the focus of subsequent interviews.

At or near the end of the visit, the team should have a "wrap-up" conference to reach consensus about the probable substance of the external evaluation report in preparation for meeting with the president.

(e) *Exit interview with the president or designate*

Before leaving the campus, the team will meet with the president or designate to provide an opportunity for response to questions that may have arisen during the visit. As well, the exit interview provides an opportunity for the team to advise the institution of the principal elements of the report without referring to the team's actual recommendation. It is highly desirable that the report not contain any major surprises of which the institution was not informed by the team before it leaves campus.

(f) *Final team conference*

If not already done during the 'wrap-up' conference referred to in (d) above, immediately after the meeting with the president or designate, the team will likely want to meet one last time before leaving the institution. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the team

- to consider any additional information pertinent to its task,
- to make decisions on the form and substance of the report,
- to reach consensus concerning the significant strengths and weaknesses which will be communicated to Council, and
- to confirm individual responsibilities and timelines for discharging them.

(g) *Contact with the institution*

It is inappropriate for the chair or any member of the evaluation team to visit the campus prior to the site visit unless the institution and Secretariat have first been advised.

During or after the comprehensive evaluation process, team members should not independently give any member of the institution feedback or advice regarding the evaluation. If an individual or individuals from the institution attempt(s) to contact a team member for advice or feedback regarding the evaluation, they should be referred to Council's Chair or Secretariat. As well, team members should not make contact with individuals at the institution to discuss the outcomes of the evaluation. The CAQC Secretariat will handle any such discussions.

4. REPORT OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

Nature of the report

Using the self-study and insights gained from the site visit, the team is asked to write a report which will provide Council with information about the continuing academic merits of the approved degree programs offered by the institution and the adequacy of the systems and processes of the institution to support excellence in learning. As noted in the previous section titled "Council's expectations", the team is asked to provide its judgement of the institution's success in offering quality degree programs, its plans to undertake its own future self-evaluation, and its proposed strategic plans for the future. As previously noted, overall, Council expects honest, constructive criticism where that is merited, and a fair presentation of the positive side of the institution's operations and programs.

The team will determine the format of its report, while taking into consideration the expectations of Council noted earlier. Typically, the report provides a brief summary of the institution, the material reviewed, and when the site visit took place. This could be followed by a section providing an assessment of the institution based on each of Council's 14 organizational standards (Appendix B)

followed by a section outlining the team's assessment of each approved degree program using the program assessment standards (Appendix C). Within each section, affirmations, commendations and areas for improvement might be presented. The site visit schedule should always be attached as an addendum to the report.

Recommendation – Whatever the format chosen, the report must contain a specific and clear recommendation with respect to whether the approved degree programs (some or all) should be reaffirmed and maintained, or whether Council should recommend to the Minister that the approved degree programs (some or all) be suspended or that the institution's approval be withdrawn. The recommendation must be supported by substantive comments and documentation of the team's findings. If there are any caveats or conditions on the recommendation, they should be clearly stated as such along with their rationale.

Commendations – Council is also very interested to learn the strengths of the institution and its approved degree programs. Reports will typically highlight these commendations along with other favourable comments throughout the text.

Suggestions for improvement – Beyond this, Council is very interested to learn of any other suggestions the team has which would improve the quality of the programs being offered and/or which would rectify serious deficiencies which the team has identified (especially where the team feels that minimum standards are not being met). Where possible or appropriate, reviewers are encouraged to offer possible approaches to addressing the areas of improvement rather than requiring specific actions that must be followed.

The report, which will help Council make decisions about the continuing status of the approved programs, is intended to facilitate constructive change by the institution.

Before submission of the report to the Secretariat, it should be checked to ensure that:

- It speaks directly to Council's organizational and program assessment standards.
- It has a clear recommendation along with the rationale (stated in terms of Council's organizational and program assessment standards) and evidence that the findings support the recommendation.
- It has provided sufficient attention to the positive aspects of the institution and its programs (commendations) as well as any areas of concern.
- It carefully distinguishes between the team's suggestions for improvement and any conditions on which a positive recommendation is based.
- Normally the report should not raise any issues that were not addressed during the site visit. However, if a new issue is presented in the report, the issue should be clearly identified as not having been discussed during the site visit.

As previously noted, the team's report is to Council, not the institution.

Preparation of the report

The members of the team will determine their relative roles and responsibilities in preparing the report. Typically, the chair writes the introductory and concluding sections of the report and edits the contributions of other members. The Secretariat coordinator will not be involved in writing the report. In the event that the Secretariat coordinator participates in the site visit, the individual should be listed as a member of the team, but should not be cited as one of the authors of the report. As well, when listing names of team members in the report, any institutional affiliation of members should not be included.

The chair will send a draft of the report to each team member for comment prior to its submission to Council. The team chair is required to send an electronic version of the report to the Secretariat when it is finalized.

Distribution of the report

Upon receipt of the report, the CAQC Secretariat will forward a copy to the institution with a request for its comments on the report. A copy of the institution's response will be forwarded to the chair of the evaluation team when it is received.

Consideration of the report and response to it

Council will consider the report of the evaluation team and the institution's comments on this report. The chair of the external evaluation team may be asked to speak to the report at a meeting of Council (in person or via telephone). Similarly, representative(s) of the institution may be invited to comment and answer questions following the meeting with the chair. Subsequently, Council will hold an in-camera discussion and make its decision on the matter.

In the case of a favourable judgement, Council will notify the institution and the Minister. If Council has concerns, it may specify remedial measures to be taken by the institution.

In the case of an unfavourable judgement, Council may recommend to the Minister that the programs be terminated and the approval for them be rescinded and notify the institution accordingly. Recommendations with respect to cessation of admission to the programs, notification to students and applicants, and arrangements whereby students in program can complete them, will also be provided following discussion with the institution.

5. ARRANGEMENTS

Communication

As soon as the team has been selected, the members will receive a letter from the CAQC Secretariat informing them of the preliminary arrangements and the names of the other members of the team. The CAQC Secretariat will contact each member regarding contractual and other arrangements for their work. Team members can expect to hear as well from the chair of the external evaluation team regarding any preferences and suggestions that the chair may have concerning the work of the team.

Materials provided to members of the external evaluation team

Each member of the team will be provided with the materials noted earlier in this document. Of particular importance for comprehensive evaluations is the institutional self-study. The self-study serves three purposes:

- (a) For an institution, it provides a very useful analysis of its objectives, resources, students and achievements and of the relationships among them that is valuable for the institution's strategic planning.
- (b) For Council and its evaluators, it provides the detailed information whereby they become familiar with the institution.

- (c) It reveals the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of an institution in relation to the achievement of its purposes and objectives. Thus, the self-study indicates to both the Council and the institution the areas that the institution must change and improve.

Institutions are expected to provide context and self-assessment under each of the following 11 categories in the self-study:

- Category 1: Mission/Mandate Educational Objectives and Academic Freedom
- Category 2: Organization and Administration
- Category 3: Financial Structure
- Category 4: Curricula and Instruction
- Category 5: Academic Staff
- Category 6: Strategic Planning
- Category 7: Information Services
- Category 8: Academic Policies and Records
- Category 9: Student Services
- Category 10: Physical Plant and Facilities
- Category 11: Institutional Publications

The nature of the self-study is to be comparative, reflective, and outcome oriented. Where possible it should include feedback from students, alumni, transfer institutions, employers, and graduate programs. The self-study should be attentive to the institution's current place in the broader Alberta educational context and should address any concerns identified in previous reviews.

The site visit

As noted earlier, before the evaluation visit occurs, a detailed schedule for the visit will be arranged by the team chair, the vice-president academic, or designate, of the institution and the CAQC Secretariat. The schedule will include plans for team members to interview students/alumni, faculty, administrators and governance board members, as well as to observe facilities, examine records (excluding individual records of students) and assess resources. It is important that the expectations for each activity are identified for the institution prior to the visit.

Parking arrangements and campus maps will be provided, as will meals and snacks. If any team member has dietary restrictions, he/she should let the Secretariat know so the information can be provided in advance to the institution.

Accommodations and expenses

Each team member is responsible for making his/her own travel arrangements to the orientation meeting. Unless there is compelling reason to do otherwise, the Secretariat will arrange for all out-of-town members to stay in the same hotel. If guest rooms are to be provided on campus, the institution will make reservations for the team and inform the Secretariat. Each team member should ensure the Secretariat is aware of travel arrangements, including arrival times, and all members are expected to attend the orientation meeting with the CAQC Chair.

The institution will have been asked to arrange for a suitable meeting room in the institution for the exclusive use of the external evaluation team where they can review materials, meet in camera and interview institutional representatives. If additional information is being provided via the internet, computers and printers should be also available, along with the telephone number of a technology support person. The room is to be locked when team members are elsewhere.

For the meeting with the CAQC Chair prior to the on-site visit, the Secretariat normally will reserve a meeting room in the hotel or at the Secretariat's office in Edmonton.

Team members' honoraria and reasonable travel expenses (i.e. contractors are expected to obtain the least expensive air fare), including transportation, meals and lodging, will be paid by CAQC. (Costs of the review are then billed to the applicant institution.) When the report has been received by CAQC, members will need to send an invoice to the CAQC in care of the Director. The invoice should:

- state the contract number and the address of the contractor,
- include a separate item for the honoraria being claimed as per contract,
- include a separate item for the total expenses being claimed as per contract (as all GST/HST must be removed; the honoraria has been adjusted to provide compensation), and
- include any relevant receipts for allowable expenses (e.g., accommodation, transportation and meals).
 - It is important that you hold on to your taxi receipts, boarding passes, restaurant bills, etc., in order to make the claim.
 - Please note that there cannot be any reimbursement for alcoholic beverages. Consequently, the government requires that, in the case of meals, receipts that itemize the food items purchased be submitted rather than the credit card statement.

In the case of the chair of the team, an interim invoice may be submitted when the report is forwarded to CAQC as long as the full honorarium is not included. If the chair presents the report at a CAQC meeting, the final invoice (the remaining honorarium and expenses to attend CAQC's meeting, if any) would be submitted after that meeting.

Hospitality

Institutions are free to make arrangements for hospitality, in consultation with the chair of the team. This may involve a get-acquainted session.

Feedback

After the report and institution's response to it have been considered by Council and its outcome determined, the Secretariat will ask each evaluator to respond to a questionnaire. As part of the questionnaire, and based on the documentation and/or meetings with the institution, evaluators will be asked to identify any practice that can be noted as a of best practices in either 'best practice' and/or a write-up that can be used as an 'exemplar' to be shared with other applicants. The institution is also asked to complete a similar questionnaire.

Additional information

Requests for additional information and/or questions of clarification may be directed at any time to the Director of the CAQC Secretariat:

Marilyn Patton
Director, Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat
11th Floor, Commerce Place
10155 – 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L5
Telephone: (780) 427-8921 Fax: (780) 427-0423
E-mail: marilyn.patton@gov.ab.ca
Web: www.caqc.gov.ab.ca

APPENDIX A

Monitoring of Approved Degree Programs

To fulfill its monitoring role, Council has adopted two forms of periodic evaluation – comprehensive evaluations and annual reporting.

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS

The Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) is responsible for assessing all degree program applications from all post secondary institutions wishing to offer degree programs in Alberta and making recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education with regard to program approval. It also is responsible for monitoring approved degree programs to ensure they continue to meet Council's conditions and standards of institutional and program quality. In addition to degree programs approved on recommendation of CAQC, Council's monitoring role also applies to degree programs approved by the Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB) and to any approved degree program referred to it by the Minister.

Section 9 of the Programs of Study Regulation indicates that, if Council determines that an institution no longer meets minimum organizational requirements or an approved degree program no longer meets Council's standards of quality, it may recommend that an approved degree program be terminated in the case of public institutions or, in the case of private institutions, that the Order in Council allowing them to offer the program be rescinded.

Council normally conducts at least one comprehensive evaluation (a combined organizational and program(s) evaluation) of an institution offering approved degree programs in Alberta. The first evaluation normally occurs five years after the institution begins offering its first approved degree program. Normally, this evaluation will occur during the sixth academic year. A subsequent comprehensive evaluation may be conducted at Council's discretion.

In cases where an institution has been approved to offer its first degree program at a new level after having previously had a successful comprehensive evaluation, Council will not normally conduct a subsequent comprehensive evaluation. In such cases, it will ask the institution to submit the report of the institution's own self evaluation of the program (see Council's Institutional Self Study Guidelines (section 3.7 of its *Handbook*). Such an evaluation must include external evaluation by Independent Academic Experts (Appendix G of the *Handbook*).

Comprehensive academic and research institutions will not be required to undergo a comprehensive evaluation. However, Council may request such institutions offering a first degree program at a new level to submit the report of the institution's self evaluation of the program. As noted above, such an evaluation must include external evaluation.

Purpose of Comprehensive Evaluations

The purposes of the comprehensive evaluations by Council include the following:

- to determine whether an institution and its approved programs continue to meet organizational and program quality standards;

- to determine whether an institution has met or has made satisfactory progress towards meeting any commitments it made to Council regarding programs, staff, libraries, facilities or any other matter;
- to determine whether an institution has
 - (a) satisfied conditions specified by Council;
 - (b) considered fully the comments, suggestions and recommendations of reports by evaluation teams, insofar as they have been supported by Council, and have responded satisfactorily to them; and
 - (c) developed suitable mechanisms to undertake its own self evaluation.
- to provide a basis for judgments regarding
 - (a) the continuation of an approved degree program, including any Council requirements or
 - (b) the withdrawal of approval of a degree program.

Council's comprehensive evaluation of each institution primarily consists of the following components:

1. the institution's self study,
2. the report of the external evaluation team following a site visit, and
3. the response by the institution to the report of the external evaluation team.

Approximately one year before a comprehensive evaluation, Council notifies the institution of the impending evaluation and asks it to conduct an institutional self study. The guidelines for self studies are found in chapter 3.7 of the *Handbook*. The self study, which normally is to be submitted one year later, is a key document for Council and its comprehensive evaluation teams.

The External Evaluation Team for Comprehensive Evaluations

As peer evaluation is an essential component of Council's evaluations, Council appoints an external evaluation team to assist it with the comprehensive evaluation. Using the institution's self study and insights gained from a site visit to the applicant institution, the external evaluation team provides a thoughtful assessment of how successful the institution has been in implementing and maintaining quality degree programs. Ultimately, this information will help Council decide on whether or not it recommends that the program be terminated as per section 9 of the Programs of Study Regulation.

Council may vary the number of evaluators and their characteristics on a comprehensive evaluation team depending on the nature of the institution and the program(s) under review. The following criteria will be employed in selecting evaluation team members to ensure an appropriate breadth of knowledge and expertise:

- personal stature in the post secondary academic community;
- relevant academic qualifications and achievements;
- experience in evaluating academic programs;
- significant experience in post secondary educational management and financing;
- experience in organizational design and behaviour; and
- training and experience in assessment and evaluation.

Comprehensive Evaluation Process

The following procedures will apply:

1. Approximately one year before Council intends to conduct a comprehensive evaluation, it will notify an institution of the pending evaluation.
2. The institution will conduct an institutional self study. It must contain an analysis and evaluation relating to all degree programs that were approved on recommendation by the Campus Alberta Quality Council or the Private Colleges Accreditation Board. The self study should include information about the 11 categories outlined in Council's Institutional Self Study Guidelines (section 3.7 of the *Handbook*).
3. The institutional self study is to be submitted to Council by a date determined in consultation with the institution.
4. As part of the evaluation, Council will appoint one or more evaluation teams to review the self study and supporting information and visit the institution. The size of each team will be determined by Council to suit the nature of each particular task.
5. Council will maintain suitable contacts with the institution regarding matters relating to the evaluation, including
 - (a) organization and planning;
 - (b) the tentative and the finalized dates of visitations;
 - (c) the nature of the evaluation team and the names of its members; and
 - (d) the nature of any materials required of the institution and any activity it may be required to undertake.

Referral of Evaluation Reports

Prior to its consideration by Council, the report of an evaluation team will be provided by the Secretariat to the institution for a written response.

Follow Up

Council will then consider the report of the evaluation team and the institution's comments on this report. The Chair of the evaluation team and senior institution representatives may be invited to discuss the review at the Council meeting at which the report and response are being considered. Subsequently, Council will hold an in camera discussion and make its decision on the matter.

In the case of a favourable judgement, Council will notify the institution and the Minister.

In the case where Council has concerns, Council may specify remedial measures to be taken by an institution. This procedure may be accompanied by one or more meetings as requested by the institution or Council.

As per the Programs of Study Regulation, in the case of an unfavourable judgement, Council may recommend to the Minister that the Minister cancel the approval of one or more degree programs offered by the institution [section 9(a)]. Further, Council may also, in the case of a degree program offered by a private institution, recommend to the Minister that the Minister recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that the order designating the resident private college as a private college that may grant approved degrees be rescinded [section 9(b)].

Should it recommend termination of an approved degree program, whether offered at a public or private institution, Council will notify the institution and make recommendations to the Minister regarding such matters as:

- i. the cessation of admissions to the program(s) at any level,
- ii. the notification of applicants and students of the status of the program(s), and
- iii. arrangements whereby students in the program(s) may complete the program(s).

These procedures may be accompanied by one or more meetings as requested by the institution or Council.

OTHER ONGOING AND PERIODIC EVALUATIONS

Purpose

The general purpose of periodic evaluation is to monitor the quality of approved degree programs on a continuing basis. To achieve this purpose Council will take various measures:

1. To determine whether an institution and its approved programs continue to meet organizational and program quality standards.
2. To determine whether an institution has met or has made satisfactory progress towards meeting any commitments it made to Council regarding programs, staff, libraries, facilities or any other matter.
3. To determine whether an institution has
 - (a) satisfied conditions specified by Council;
 - (b) considered fully the comments, suggestions and recommendations of reports by evaluation teams, insofar as they have been supported by Council, and have responded satisfactorily to them; and
 - (c) developed suitable mechanisms to undertake its own self evaluation.
4. To provide a basis for judgments regarding
 - (a) the continuation of an approved degree program, including any Council requirements or;
 - (b) the withdrawal of approval of a degree program.

Forms of Ongoing and Periodic Evaluations

Council will use the following means of evaluating institutions:

Annual Report

As part of the Government of Alberta's accountability process, institutions must submit an Annual Report to the Minister that includes their audited financial statements, as well as any other information required by the Minister. The Post secondary institution annual report guideline serves to inform institutions of the information requirements of the department. Institutional annual reports are submitted to the department of Advanced Education and Technology by 31 January of each year and, where appropriate, will be considered by Council.

Each institution is also required to submit directly to Council a separate annual update on their approved degree programs consisting of specific information identified by Council. This requirement is in addition to the institutional annual reports required by the Ministry, but it will not duplicate the information that is reported to the Ministry. The annual update will be due to Council by 1 November of each year, and prior to its submission, Council will write to institutions to remind them of its monitoring requirements/expectations. This timeline will allow Council to review the updates at its December meeting and provide timely and useful feedback to the institutions.

Subsequent Evaluations

After a first successful comprehensive evaluation Council expects the institution to accept responsibility for a self evaluation of its organization and programs. All institutions are expected to develop a systematic program evaluation plan which should be based on the following guidelines:

- (a) Each approved program should normally be reviewed every 5 - 7 years.
- (b) A program's self study should be conducted as part of the review and should include input from students, graduates, faculty and administration.
- (c) The steering committee for the review should include an academic faculty member from the institution who teaches in a program that is not being reviewed.
- (d) Each program review should focus on the degree program's design, implementation and outcomes (including student and graduate satisfaction, completion rates, employment rates of graduates, numbers of graduates who go on to further education, etc.).
- (e) Scholarly and professional activity of faculty within the program as well as research and grants should be included.
- (f) A qualified external reviewer (Independent Academic Experts, Appendix G of the *Handbook*) should participate in the review by reviewing the self study, visiting the campus and conducting on site interviews, and preparing a report.

The institution will determine whether all concentrations within a 3 year program should be reviewed together or whether a concentration should be reviewed at the time the like major in a 4 year program is being reviewed (e.g., music concentration in a 3 year BA might be reviewed at the same time as the music major in a 4 year BA program). Some institutions may wish to organize their periodic reviews so that all programs within that unit or faculty are reviewed at the same time.

The results of the review, together with the steps to be taken to correct deficiencies, shall be submitted to Council.

Council may comment on the review and retains the right to conduct external evaluations of its own with regard to any matter should it feel there is a need to do so to safeguard the quality of academic programs.

Periodic Reporting

On Council's request, an institution may be required to report at a specified interval on issues relating to an approved degree program. Such issues may emanate, for example, from the reports of external evaluators, from commitments made by the institution, or from annual reporting information.

Special Evaluations

Where, in the judgment of Council, circumstances warrant it, or if directed to do so by the Minister, Council may arrange a special evaluation of an institution, or of any of its approved programs, or of the proposed re-activation of a suspended approved degree program. The institution will be notified of:

- (a) the reason for the special evaluation;
- (b) the purpose of the evaluation;
- (c) the time of the evaluation;
- (d) any preparation required of the institution; and
- (e) the size and composition of any evaluation team that may be used.

Other Evaluations

In the event that any academic agency reviews and reports in writing upon any institutional matter relating to Council's responsibilities, the institution will make available to Council such a report.

APPENDIX B

Campus Alberta Quality Council Quality Assessment Standards – Organizational

In making its recommendation to the Minister, the *Post-secondary Learning Act* requires the Campus Alberta Quality Council to consider the ability of institutions to deliver and sustain high quality degree programs. To meet this goal, all degree programs recommended by the council must offer an education of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet national and international standards of programs at recognized post-secondary institutions.

Organizational Assessment Standards

1. **Mandate and mission** – The organization has a clearly articulated and published mandate (public institutions) or mission (private institutions) and academic goals statement, approved by the governing board and appropriate for a degree-granting institution, and has academic policies and standards that support the organization’s mission and educational objectives to ensure degree quality and relevance. The mission includes a commitment to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and, where applicable, the creation of knowledge and service to the community or related professions.
2. **Governance and administrative capacity** – The organization has the legal characteristics and the leadership, through a governance structure and administrative capacity, necessary to organize and manage a reputable, effective and high quality degree-granting institution.
3. **Academic freedom and integrity** – The organization maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists. Where adherence to a statement of faith and/or code of conduct might constitute a constraint upon academic freedom, the conditions of membership in that institution’s community must be clear prior to admission or employment. Students and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity.
4. **Academic policies** – The organization has published admission, continuation and graduation policies consistent with the objectives of its programs and has the capacity to ensure that academic records of students are secure.
5. **Organizational policies, strategic planning and periodic review** – The organization has appropriate policies and processes in place to assess the effectiveness, continuous growth and improvement of its educational programs and services, including a strategic planning process (both for short and long range plans) that enables the organization to respond in a focused, effective and innovative way to the challenges of its environment and constituents. Policies and procedures are in place which address internal curriculum development and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

6. **Financial planning and resources** – The organization has the financial management procedures, resources and appropriate planning to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that students can complete the degree program.
7. **Ethical conduct** – The organization values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct as demonstrated by the relevant policies and practices by which it conducts its business. It has fair and ethical policies in place governing admissions and recruitment of students, and a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit.
8. **Faculty and staff** – The organization has the human resources, including appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff, necessary to achieve its mission and academic goals. The organization has policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff.
Revised to add “including employment equity”, March 2008
9. **Information services and systems** – The organization has the information services and learning resources to support the academic programs for students and faculty, as well as an established method of setting priorities with respect to their acquisition. The institution is committed to maintaining and supplementing them as needed. As well, the organization has the systems in place to gather and analyze data, which are used for planning and decision-making purposes. It establishes specific performance indicators and benchmarks by which programs and academic units are assessed.
10. **Student services and student protection** – The organization values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct in its relations with students through the availability of full, accurate and truthful material regarding its mission and goals; history; governance and academic structure; program and subject descriptions; faculty and administrator credentials; entrance requirements including credit transfer and prior learning assessment policies; clear and informative student enrollment agreements verifying student awareness of relevant policies; support services; payment requirements and refund policies; financial assistance; and transcript protection.
11. **Dispute resolution** – The organization has policies for dealing with disputes between the organization and its students, the organization and its faculty, and between faculty and students where complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of students, faculty, staff and administration are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
12. **Scholarly and research support** – The organization has policies and procedures in place to support and facilitate engagement by academic staff in scholarship and, where appropriate, research or creative activity.
13. **Physical plant** – The organization has the facilities, including laboratories, classrooms, technology and specialized equipment, as well as the existence of plans and methods for managing health and safety issues, appropriate to support degree programming in the program(s) it offers or proposes to offer.
14. **Graduate program policies** – Organizations proposing graduate programs have policies, structures and mechanisms in place appropriate to graduate studies and research.

APPENDIX C

Campus Alberta Quality Council Quality Assessment Standards - Program

Unless otherwise indicated, where a separate standard is listed for a particular degree level/category (i.e. 'For Applied Degrees'), that standard completely replaces the main standard.

1. **Faculty and staff** – The program is supported by an appropriate number of suitably qualified academic faculty and instructional staff to develop and deliver the degree program. Faculty shall have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative activity for the baccalaureate or graduate program involved.

For Applied Degrees - The program is supported by an appropriate number of suitably qualified academic faculty and instructional staff to develop and deliver the degree program. Faculty shall maintain continuing academic and professional competence and accreditation in their discipline or field appropriate to the specific applied degree program.

2. **Academic policies** – The program has academic policies such as those dealing with admissions, promotion and graduation requirements, mature students, credit transfer and prior learning assessment, appeals, and academic dishonesty consistent with the level of the degree program. It has established policies and procedures that outline the process by which transfer of academic credit is awarded.

For Applied Degrees – By definition, applied degrees must have a work-related experience component. Therefore, in addition to the above, the institution must have policies and procedures which define the roles of the institution, employer and student in the directed field studies component of the program and resources in place to effect these policies. Work placements and learning outcomes must be directly related to the practical and work experience program outcomes.

3. **Resource capacity** – The program is supported by the physical resources, both start-up and development, needed to assure the quality of the degree program. These include, where applicable, equipment, library and learning resources (physical and electronic), laboratories, computing facilities, shops, specialized equipment, etc., and work placements where this is a component of the program. There is an institutional commitment to maintaining and supplementing resources and equipment as needed to meet standards applicable to the field.
4. **Credential recognition** – The credential is or can be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, employers, and professional and licensing bodies, where applicable. There is an appropriate fit between the nomenclature of the credential and the content of the degree. The name of a degree should convey long-term meaning, and the content of the degree program should be consistent with the name.

For Applied Degrees – The credential is or can be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, employers, and professional and licensing bodies, where applicable. There is an appropriate fit between the nomenclature of the credential and the content of the degree. The name of a degree should convey long-term meaning, and the content of the degree program should be consistent with the name. Institutions

are responsible for advising students of the nature of the applied degree with respect to its recognition for further study.

5. **Program delivery** – Learning methodologies are the methods of delivery that will be used to achieve the desired learning outcomes at an acceptable level of quality. The institution must demonstrate that it has the expertise and resources to support the proposed method of delivery and ensure its effectiveness
6. **Program content** – The program offers education of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet relevant national and international standards, and the content of the program, in both subject matter and outcome standards, is appropriate to the level of the degree program and the field of study. Its curriculum must be current and reflect the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs. The institution must have a process to maintain the currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes.
7. **Program structure** – The structure of the degree is such that there is an appropriate balance between core requirements and specialized courses, for example, between Arts and Science courses and discipline specific courses, and between the proposed program and existing programs.
8. **Program evaluation** – The program is subject to a formal, approved policy and procedure requiring a periodic review and improvement process. The policy and procedure includes assessment of the program against published standards (including the institution's own learning outcome standards for the program), and assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program against program outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.
9. **Regulation and accreditation** – Learning outcomes and other requirements for graduation in programs leading to professions are designed to prepare students to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory, accrediting, quality assurance or professional body.

APPENDIX D

Campus Alberta Quality Council Code of Conduct for Reviewers

Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to establish rules of conduct to govern the professional and ethical responsibilities of reviewers engaged by the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) as it carries out its stated responsibilities for organizational, program and comprehensive reviews.

The Code is based on the principles of integrity, honesty, openness and concern for the public interest. It is designed to maintain the effectiveness of CAQC as a whole and to ensure the fairness of all CAQC procedures and decision making. It addresses common situations that reviewers may experience as they carry out their responsibilities, while recognizing that not all situations can be anticipated. All reviewers have a responsibility to consider appropriate standards of behavior and to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. The Code assumes that it is not only the actual situation but also the *perception* others may have of it that may lead to a perception of bias or conflict of interest.

To Whom Does the Code Apply?

The Code applies to all reviewers appointed by CAQC to enable it to make informed recommendations and decisions about approval and monitoring of degree programs.

When is This Code Applicable?

The Code governs the conduct of reviewers from the date of appointment. It also includes the continuing responsibilities of reviewers after the completion of their terms with respect to decisions made by CAQC while the person was a reviewer.

General Rules of Conduct

All reviewers shall complete a statement attesting that they have read and agreed to the statements included in the Code of Conduct.

Sample Statement

I, _____, have been appointed as a member of an external evaluation team reporting to the Campus Alberta Quality Council. I have read and understand the CAQC Code of Conduct for Reviewers.

I agree to comply fully and to the best of my ability with the provisions of the Code.

Dated at _____ this _____ day of _____ .

Reviewers should be committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in post-secondary education. When considering the program proposal, or other matters referred to them, reviewers shall make their recommendations on the merits of the information available, and shall consider the information provided in good faith and to the best of their ability, not being concerned with the prospect of disapproval from any person, institution, or community.

Reviewers shall be sensitive to issues of gender, race, language, culture and religion that may affect the conduct of a review, the recommendations considered by Council, or a decision.

a. Confidentiality

A reviewer shall agree that all information related to a review, including information provided by an applicant institution, is confidential and shall treat such information in strict confidence and with the care and security required to ensure that the information is not disclosed without CAQC's prior written consent. A reviewer will not use the information provided for any purpose outside that of undertaking work for CAQC.

A reviewer must respect the confidential nature of third-party information submitted by the applicant and restrict the use of this information to CAQC work. Reviewers shall return (or attest that they have shredded) all material used in assessing applications when the activity for which it was required is completed. All electronic copies of confidential material should be disposed of within a term specified by agreement between the reviewer and the Ministry.

"Information" means all information, data, material and documents obtained by a reviewer before, during, or after the review and includes program proposals, institutional self-studies, information obtained during a site visit and all other information furnished or disclosed to him/her by CAQC, the Secretariat or an institution whether directly or indirectly, in written, oral, magnetic, electronic or other forms.

The confidentiality requirement set out in this Code does not apply to any part of the information which is in the public domain at the date of disclosure to the reviewer or which after that date enters the public domain, other than by any act or failure to act on the part of the reviewer.

A reviewer shall, at all times, adhere to the intent and requirements of Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* which applies to all information, material and records relating to, or obtained, created, maintained, submitted or collected during the course of a review.

b. Conflict of Interest

A reviewer must avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest that might impair, influence or impugn the independence, integrity or impartiality of CAQC. Conflict of interest is any interest, relationship, association or activity that is incompatible with a reviewer's responsibilities as an impartial assessor. Reviewers shall ensure that they:

- (i) conduct their duties with impartiality and disqualify themselves from dealing with anyone with whom a prior relationship could bring their impartiality into question;
- (ii) refrain from furthering their private interests;
- (iii) avoid accepting any commission, discount, allowance, payment, gift (other than a small token gift) or other benefit that is connected, directly or indirectly, with the performance of their duties related to the review, that causes, or would appear to cause, a conflict of interest;
- (iv) have no financial interest in the business of a third party that causes, or would appear to cause, a conflict of interest in connection with the performance of their duties related to the review; if such financial interest is acquired during the term as identified in the agreement between a reviewer and CAQC, the reviewer shall promptly declare it to CAQC;

- (v) decline to participate in a review for CAQC that involves a party or representative with whom they were formerly in a significant professional relationship until a period of 12 months has elapsed since the termination of that relationship. A significant professional relationship includes, but is not limited to, employment or consulting, collaboration on a project, supervision of students in the program, and providing expert advice during development of a proposal; and
- (vi) do not participate in any advisory council or implementation committee for programs or institutions they have reviewed for CAQC for six months from the time of the Minister's decision.

The Chair shall ask all potential reviewers to indicate, prior to appointment, whether they have any reason to be in a conflict of interest if they were to review a given program or institution. A reviewer with a conflict of interest in regards to an application must decline to serve as a reviewer. If unsure whether a conflict of interest exists, the reviewer shall inform the Chair about his/her circumstances. The Chair will determine whether a conflict of interest exists and will inform a reviewer of his/her decision.

c. Public Statements

A reviewer shall not make public statements, orally or in writing, on any issues with respect to the institution or program he/she was involved in reviewing. In cases where it is not clear what a reviewer may say publicly about an issue, discretion should be used, and the reviewer should consult with the CAQC Chair or the Secretariat.

A reviewer shall refrain from communicating with the media regarding the deliberations or decisions of CAQC. All inquiries from the media or other parties shall be referred to the CAQC Chair or the Secretariat.

Reviewers should review carefully CAQC's *Policy on Release of Information*, especially section B, which outlines the responsibilities of reviewers. The policy is available on CAQC's website.